



Voting Information News

September 2002 *or* Vol. 12, No. 9

*A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)
For voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.*

Issue Highlights:

Federal Write-In
Absentee Ballot 1

How To Use The
FWAB 2

Suggestions For
Submitting The
FWAB 2

FWAB Vs State
Write-In 3

Reasons Why The
FWAB May Not Be
Counted 4

Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month:

- ✓ Encourage participation in the remaining primary elections and the upcoming November elections. In many cases, requests for registration must be received at least 30 days prior to the election. Consult the *Voting Assistance Guide* at www.fvap.gov for state-by-state details and encourage all UOCAVA citizens to participate. Make sure you provide a training session or briefing devoted to registration and voting procedures. These sessions should be available to all personnel and their family members.

(continued on page 2)

If your regular state absentee ballot does not arrive in time, use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

What exactly is the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB)? What purpose does it serve and where is it available? When can it be used and who can use it? Read on for these answers and more...

The most common barrier that citizens covered under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* (UOCAVA) encounter when voting absentee is insufficient ballot transit time. Many citizens are located in remote areas around the world where mail is not delivered or picked up on a regular basis (such as sailors and marines aboard ship, and Peace Corps workers, missionaries, airmen, sailors and soldiers at remote sites).

The FWAB is pre-positioned overseas as a "back-up" ballot should a citizen not receive his or her regular ballot from the state or territory in enough time to meet state deadlines for counting (See note at end of article).

Under federal provisions, a U.S. citizen may use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot to vote for federal offices in the

General Election if that citizen meets all three of the following conditions:

1. The citizen must be **located outside the United States including APO and FPO addresses**, and;
2. The citizen must make a **timely ballot request**, and submit the FPCA or other state accepted form to their state of legal voting residence requesting a state absentee ballot so that the appropriate Local Election Official receives their request at least 30 days before the election. This year the FPCA must be **received** on or before October 7th for the 2002 General Election), and
3. The citizen has **not received** the regular state absentee ballot.

Summarized, the FWAB is only valid when a U.S. citizen makes a timely ballot request for the General Election, is located outside the United States (including AFO and FPO addresses) and for one reason or another the requested absentee ballot has not been received. (see "How To Use The FWAB" on page 2)

**NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT TO SUBMIT YOUR
FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA) Standard Form 76
SO THE LOCAL ELECTIONS OFFICE**

Receives It BY October 7, 2002!

Why? In many states the deadline for receipt of registration and/or absentee ballot requests is 30 days before the November 5, 2002 General Election. There are no states with earlier deadlines. Check the *Voting Assistance Guide* for specific state deadlines. Don't miss your state's registration deadline.

- ✓ Be prepared and equipped to give assistance to voters. Remind them of the Voting Information Center where they can call in to hear messages from their elected officials and candidates for federal offices.
- ✓ Make sure that you promote the use of the electronic transmission service and be familiar with the procedures for faxing election materials (follow the state procedures for the faxing of materials).
- ✓ Ensure you have adequate supplies of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). If you are overseas, be sure to have one on hand for each person you are assisting.
- ✓ Post notices on bulletin boards and in high-traffic areas motivating people to register and vote. Include a point of contact name and telephone number on the notice so interested citizens will know how to obtain additional information or materials.
- ✓ Make sure that the installation or embassy/consulate operator knows where to refer callers who require voting assistance.
- ✓ Advise citizens to include an e-mail or a fax number on the FPCA as an alternative means for the Local Election Official to reach the applicant if needed.

How To Use The FWAB

If eligible to use this ballot, the citizen may indicate their election choices for federal offices in the General Election. To vote this blank write-in ballot, citizens may write in a candidates name by writing in their name or write in the name of a party affiliation (if the intention of a voter can be ascertained then the candidate/party choices will be accepted). The FWAB is similar to the regular state absentee ballot as it includes a secrecy envelope and a mailing envelope. **For personal security purposes, you may choose not to fill-in items 1.c, 1.d, and 1.e on the back of the mailing envelope. However, if the state requires these items, you may write this information on a separate sheet of paper and place inside mailing envelope.** FWABs are available worldwide at U.S. embassies and consulates, military installations and overseas organizations and corporations with U.S. citizens.

Currently, the FWAB is prescribed by federal Law for use in General Elections for federal offices only. During the 2002 primaries, on an ad hoc basis, some states and jurisdictions expanded this use for Primary Elections. Seven states have legislatively expanded its use beyond the federal law to include use in elections other than General Elections and/or voting for offices other than federal offices

– Connecticut, Iowa, Montana, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Virginia and West Virginia. Virginia allows the FWAB to be used from within the U.S.

Use the FWAB from overseas when the election is rapidly approaching and insufficient time exists for you to receive, vote and timely return your requested state ballot.

Note: A sample FWAB with instructions can be found on pages 21-24 of the 2002-03 *Voting Assistance Guide*. Chapter 3 provides state-specific instructions regarding proper use of the FWAB. ☐



SUGGESTIONS For Submitting The FWAB: We recommend that overseas citizens who have not received their regular state absentee ballot by the 25th day before the election (October 11, 2002), complete and submit the FWAB to their state local election official if they have met each of the requirements (see page 1). This will help to ensure timely receipt of their absentee ballot for federal offices. The FWAB must be received by the local election official not later than the deadline for receipt of regular state absentee ballots for that election under state or territory law.

Citizens who receive their regular state absentee ballot after submitting the FWAB, should vote and return the ballot immediately. Reason: If a citizen's regular state absentee ballot also arrives by the deadline for receipt of absentee ballots, the state will count the regular state absentee ballot instead of the FWAB, as it will include non-federal offices.

To further ensure that the absentee ballot complies with state's guidelines, instructions and requirements, carefully review before submission. Citizens should make sure that they are submitting the FWAB to the correct jurisdiction. Sign and date the ballot return envelope and obtain a witness signature if the state requires it.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!

The Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot and the State Special Write-In Absentee Ballot

Several states provide a State Special Write-In Absentee Ballot for citizens who are unable to use regular state absentee voting procedures (submariners, citizens in isolated areas). This **State Special Write-In Absentee Ballot** should not be confused with the **Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot**. Federal law prescribes eligibility requirements for FWAB use. State laws prescribe requirements for State Special ballot use.

The following states provide a special write-in ballot: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut*, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

State-specific instructions regarding proper use of State Special ballots are provided in Chapter 3 of the 2002-03 *Voting Assistance Guide*.

Make sure that you are registered to receive Voting Information News (VIN) via e-mail. Why? The FVAP may enter into an ad hoc agreement with the state, or take legal action to allow expanded use of the FWAB. The FVAP will then notify citizens regarding the use of the FWAB through the VIN, Voting News Releases and the FVAP Website. We encourage you to always vote the regular ballot regardless of its receipt date because a state may allow late counting of these ballots from overseas citizens.

*Please Note: The State of Connecticut is not required by federal law to accept the FWAB, though in 1996 it began accepting it in regular elections for federal offices. In addition, a Special State Write-In Ballot is available 90 days before an election to members of the Armed Forces and dependents accompanying them, who, due to military contingencies, are unable to use regular absentee voting procedures. ☑



'Of The People, By The People... Only If You Vote.'

HHC Wade M. Lindon,
USN 1984

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All of the above can also be reached through the DoD Voting Information Center and the FVAP website.

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